

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 05596 101200Z

41 L
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 RSR-01 DPW-01 IO-13

AID-20 /097 W
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R 101126Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5336
INFO CINCPAC
CINCPACAF
DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5596

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MCAP,MASS,LA

SUBJECT: AIR SUPPORT CONTRACTS

REF: A. VIENTIANE 5424
B. STATE 156938 (NOTAL)

1. APPRECIATE PROMPT REPLY (REF A). IT IS CORRECT THAT RAL HAS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. IT IS INCORRECT THAT RAL HAS OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES DUE TO POOR MANAGEMENT. THE OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES OF RAL WITH THE TWO TRANS-AIR LEASED ELECTRAS WERE DUE TO LACK OF SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO PURCHASE PROPELLERS TO MAINTAIN AIRCRAFT. THIS PROBLEM HAS NOW BEEN OVERCOME: PROPELLERS HAVE BEEN SHIPPED TO VIENTIANE AND THE TWO TRANS-AIR ELECTRAS ARE OPERATING AGAIN ON SCHEDULE VERY EFFICIENTLY.

2. WE SEE NO REASON WHY WE CANNOT WORK OUT WITH RAL AN ARRANGEMENT FOR CONTRACTING WITH A QUALIFIED AMERICAN COMPANY SUCH AS TRANS-AIR FOR THE OPERATION OF THE TWO GRANT C-46'S THUS ASSURING ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE AND QUALIFIED PILOTS.

3. WE ALSO SEE NO DIFFICULTIES IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT WITH RAL
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THAT PAYMENTS FOR SERVICES RENDERED BY THE C-46'S WOULD GO DIRECTLY

TO THE AMERICAN COMPANY INVOLVED FOR ITS COSTS.

4. AGAIN, WE SEE NO REASON WHY RAL SHOULD NOT ACCEPT STANDARD AID CONTRACT PROVISIONS FOR AUDIT.

5. THE STATUS OF LAO AIR DEVELOPMENT, WILLIAM BIRD'S COMPANY, IS IN LIMBO BECAUSE MOVES ARE NOW UNDERWAY WITHIN THE RLG FOR RAL TO BECOME WITHIN NEAR FUTURE THE ONLY LAO AIRLINE AUTHORIZED TO OPERATE WITHIN LAOS.

6. THE C-46 OPERATIONS WOULD BE COST-SHARED. IN INITIAL PERIOD WE WILL CONSIDER USE OF C-46 FOR PURELY RICE AIR DROP MISSIONS IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES. CONTROL, SCHEDULING AND DISPATCH OVER AIRCRAFT WILL REST EXCLUSIVELY WITH USAID AIR SUPPORT BRANCH.

7. DEFINITIVE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN REF (B) AND COMMENTED ON HEREIN CANNOT BE GIVEN UNTIL WE HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH PANYA SOUVANNA PHOUMA, RAL DIRECTOR GENERAL. UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED, WE PLAN TO COMMENCE SUCH CONVERSATIONS WITH PANYA SOUVANNA

PHOUMA ON AUGUST 15.

DEAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VIENTI05596
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS DEAN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730843/aaaabfsn.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 VIENTIANE 5424
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28-Nov-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <20-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AIR SUPPORT CONTRACTS
TAGS: MCAP, MASS, LA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005